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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 002039

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DRL

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TAGS: PHUM PREL FR UNCHR

SUBJECT: FRANCE ON VARIOUS UN/HR/CHR ISSUES

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1B. PARIS 1721

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Summary: Poloff met March 23 with Beatrice le Fraper du Hellen, DAS-equivalent for Human Rights in the MFA's United Nations and International Organizations bureau, to discuss several UN, human rights, and CHR-related issues. End Summary.

Cuba

12. (C) In discussing the proposed Cuba resolution, Fraper du Hellen noted that she understood the necessity of the modest language in order to ensure passage. France would support the text, but, Fraper du Hellen said the GOF would prefer to see a provision encouraging Cuba to cooperate with the Personal Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Cuba, believing it would be acceptable to Latin American countries. She also thought that Belgium might co-sponsor the resolution this year. While on the subject, Fraper du Hellen wanted to inform the USG that it was possible that Christine Chanet, the French magistrate serving as the Personal Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Cuba, might have to resign her post after the 61st Commission due to her recent and unexpected election to the chair of the UN Human Rights Committee. The new position was a big job and it would be difficult to hold both positions, Fraper du Hellen continued, but Chanet might be open to discussion.

No Action/GTMO/Arbitrary Detention

13. (C) Fraper du Hellen reiterated that the French agreed with us about avoiding no action motions, but asked whether we would honor the principle should a Guantanamo (GTMO)-related resolution be introduced (which she had heard was a possibility). The French felt they were addressing their concerns through a thematic resolution on arbitrary detention rather than a specific one and would not support a resolution on GTMO; however, they had been approached by Egypt about doing so.

Forced Disappearances

14. (C) Fraper du Hellen underlined that the French resolution on forced disappearances was not pointed at the U.S. Rather, it was drafted with the political disappearances in Algeria and Latin America in mind and was an attempt to improve relations with those countries.

Extreme Poverty

15. (C) France's resolution on extreme poverty was misunderstood, according to Fraper du Hellen. The resolution's goal was to point out that extreme poverty existed in all countries and that those suffering from it are often denied other human rights. Fraper du Hellen believed that some developing countries were bothered by the resolution, preferring to corner the market on poverty themselves.

PA Rep/EU Res on Israeli Settlements

16. (C) Fraper du Hellen confided that the GOF had intervened directly, as friends and at the highest levels, with the Palestinian Authority in the territories and in Algiers to express their exasperation with the PA representative in Geneva. His attitude, she continued, did not reflect the positive actions on the ground and at Sharm el-Sheikh. The PA responded that they "understood" French concerns. The EU planned to put forth a resolution on Israeli settlements that would be balanced with a mention of terror attacks. Arab states were preparing a "terrible" resolution with no such mention, which, Fraper du Hellen noted, was one of the reasons the French had approached the PA at a high level. Fraper du Hellen dismissed a draft Lebanese resolution on detainees in Israel as not relevant to the problem.

Community of Democracies

17. (C) In principle, Fraper du Hellen noted, France would

like to work through the UN as much as possible, and this extended to the Community of Democracies. When it came to defining democracies, she stated, the U.S. tended to use free elections as the benchmark. The French saw free elections as an important element of a democracy, but went further, including human rights and adherence to international rights and conventions. She pointed specifically to Afghanistan, where free elections were a good start, but further work was necessary in areas like women's rights. Fraper du Hellen remarked that the U.S. had a tendency to always work through UNDP, which was a good organization, but one lacking a complete understanding of international conventions. She encouraged the inclusion of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. Finally, she noted that France had worked well with Chile on the Community of Democracies and was currently doing so with Mali.

UN Reform

18. (C) Fraper du Hellen commented that France supported enlargement of the Security Council and the addition of "real" new members -- specifically mentioning Germany and Japan, though France supports Brazil and India as well. Concerning the CHR, Paris had concerns about its transformation into a smaller and more restrictive body, and Fraper du Hellen encouraged expansion rather than contraction. She noted that France did not see the logic in changing the format, and stated that restricting the number of countries seemed counterintuitive. Dictatorships typically tried harder than democracies to get on the commission, she continued, and a smaller commission gave their voices more weight. She also voiced concerns that proposed restrictions would limit NGO access.
Wolff